



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **25 arrested in ICE operation targeting criminal alien sex offenders** ***Four of the targets face federal prosecution for re-entry after deportation***

LOS ANGELES – A Mexican national who attempted to kidnap a seven-year-old girl from a local Laundromat is one of 25 persons arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Los Angeles during the past three days as part of a joint enforcement effort with the United States Attorney's Office targeting foreign nationals with prior convictions for sex offenses, many of them involving children.

Four of the foreign nationals taken into custody during this week's operation have been deported from the United States previously. The group includes two Salvadorans, a Honduran, and a Mexican national. The defendants are being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's newly created Domestic Security and Immigration Crimes Section for re-entering the United States after deportation, a felony that carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Earlier this week, the four were ordered detained without bond. A fifth man, a Salvadoran national convicted of lewd and lascivious acts on a child under 14, also faces criminal charges, but he remains at large.

The sex offenders being prosecuted for felony re-entry include Jose Angel Pakas-Murcia, 46, a Honduran national who was deported in 1995 after serving time for sexually assaulting a nine-year-old girl in Florida. ICE agents arrested Pakas-Murcia Tuesday at the local car dealership where he worked as a manager in the parts department.

The remaining 21 sex offenders - including 17 Mexican nationals, three Salvadorans, and a Filipino - are being detained by ICE and will be placed in administrative immigration proceedings. Of the 21, 14 are legal permanent residents whose criminal convictions make them subject to deportation. The remaining seven entered the country illegally.

The arrests are the latest local enforcement action carried out as part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE initiative to identify, investigate, arrest and, in the case of foreign nationals, deport those who prey on children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, and Internet pornographers.

The foreign nationals arrested on administrative immigration violations include Gabino Chavez-Rosales, a 43-year-old Mexican national who was convicted in California state court of lewd acts with a minor. The charges stem from an incident where the Glendale resident tried to kidnap a young girl who was playing in a Laundromat parking lot. Also arrested on immigration violations was Jose Luis Rodriguez-Lucatero, 41, who entered the United States illegally from Mexico and was convicted for the attempted rape of a 15-year-old girl.

“These pedophiles pose a serious threat to the well-being of our children, our families, and our communities,” said Robert Schoch, special agent-in-charge for the ICE office of investigations in Los Angeles. “We will continue to work closely with the United States Attorney’s Office and our other law enforcement partners to target those who prey on the children of this community. In the case of foreign nationals who commit predatory offenses, we can not only take them off of the streets, but we can seek to have them sent out of the country.”

Meanwhile, ICE agents are continuing to search for the fifth criminal suspect sought in the operation, Alejandro Rodriguez Villegas, 50, of Los Angeles. The Salvadoran, who was sentenced to five years in prison for lewd and lascivious acts with a child under 14, was previously deported in 1997.

Since ICE launched Operation Predator in July of 2003, the agency has arrested more than 8,200 sex offenders nationwide. More than 1,100 of those arrests were made by ICE agents in the Los Angeles area.

Operation Predator is part of ICE’s expanded interior immigration enforcement strategy, which focuses on identifying and removing criminal aliens, immigration fugitives, and other immigration violators from the United States. The agency’s top priority is arresting and removing foreign nationals who pose a threat to public safety or national security.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov). ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*